

**Correct Bite:** Most breeds of puppies have 28 primary (baby) teeth that begin to erupt around 4 weeks of age. Between 4 and 5 months of age a puppy will get his permanent teeth pushing out the baby teeth. If baby teeth have trouble falling out you will need to see your veterinarian as retention can lead to misalignment. A puppy's bite can take up to two years to settle into permanent position. A scissor bite at 8 weeks will usually remain a scissor bite in adulthood. An undershot bite will often correct itself, but an overshot bite will never correct itself. A scissor bite is most preferred in many breeds, whereas a level bite, or under bite may be acceptable in other breeds. "Correct bite" is what acceptable in the conformation show ring for each particular breed when being judged. An under bite occurs when the lower teeth protrude in front of the upper jaw teeth. An over bite (parrot mouth) occurs when the lower jaw is shorter than the upper. An over bite is never considered normal in any breed and is a fault. I have witnessed a puppy having a scissor bite at 8 weeks and then around 6 months of age a slight under bite develops, but then around 12 months of age the bite returns to a scissor bite. As puppies develop they go through structural changes that can throw the bite off temporarily.



#### **What does this mean to me?**

If our vet records a less than perfect bite, you will be notified. At that time you can make the decision to keep your reservation on the puppy you have chosen, or to move that reservation to another available puppy or a puppy from a future litter. I always share that puppies are just like our own kids, except we put braces on our children when their teeth are not correctly aligned. It normally causes no health issues, but we want you to be aware that an incorrect bite is present.

If you are breeding or showing, you would not want a poor bite. A dam can still get pregnant and whelp with a poor bite, but that bite may be passed down to her offspring. Genetics sometimes plays games with us though and so that is a part of the unknown of dog breeding. However, an incorrect bite is not tolerated in the showing.